

REMARKS

Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mima (US, 6,879,357) in view of Tagusa et al. (US, 5,859,683).

Claims 2-8 stand allowable if rewritten into independent form.

Summary of the Response to the Office Action

To facilitate allowance of the present application, Applicants cancel independent claim 1 and withdrawn claims 9-16 without prejudice or disclaimer, amend dependent claims 2 and 3 into independent form, amend dependent claims 4-8 to depend from newly amended independent claim 2 and add new claims 17-21. Accordingly, claims 2-8 and 17-21 are presently pending.

All Claims Define Allowable Subject Matter

Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mima (US, 6,879,357) in view of Tagusa et al. (US, 5,859,683) and claims 2-8 stand allowable if re-written in independent form. To facilitate allowance of the present application, Applicants cancel independent claim 1 without prejudice or disclaimer. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) be withdrawn. In addition, Applicants rewrite dependent claims 2 and 3 into independent form and amend dependent claims 4-8 to depend from newly amended independent claim 2. Accordingly, since amended dependent claims 4-8 depend from allowable independent claim 2, Applicants respectfully asserts that claims 2-8 are allowable.

New Claims 17-21

Applicants add new claims 17-21 to further define the invention. Applicants respectfully submit that new claims 17-21 depend from allowable independent claim 3. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully assert that new claims 17-21 are allowable.

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In light of the arguments presented above, Applicants respectfully assert that the present application is in clear condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants respectfully requests reconsideration of this application, withdrawal of all rejections, and the timely allowance of all pending claims. Should the Examiner feel that there are any issues outstanding after consideration of this response, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representative to expedite prosecution.

If there are any other fees due in connection with the filing of this response, please charge the fees to our Deposit Account No. 50-0310. If a fee is required for an extension of time under 37 C.R.R. § 1.136 not accounted for above, such an extension is requested and the fee should also be charged to our Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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